ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention provides a data decoding apparatus and method by which the data rate can be discriminated at a high speed using a Viterbi decoding process. Receive data are successively Viterbi decoded beginning with the top thereof. At a point of time when receive data which may possibly be end bit position data required for data rate discrimination are Viterbi decoded, data necessary for the data rate discrimination are successively extracted, and the data rate is discriminated based on the extracted necessary data.